

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for a vendor to dispense postage over a network to a remote personal computer, the method comprising:

obtaining, by the vendor, a meter license from a postal service~~the Post~~, said meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor, said meter account being maintained at a data center;

receiving, via the network, a transaction request for postage from a customer using the remote personal computer, the customer not having a meter license from the postal service, said transaction request including information from the customer, said information corresponding to the transaction requested and payment method;

processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor;

effecting payment for the transaction based on the information received from the customer;

receiving the evidence of postage payment created by the data center; and

sending the evidence of postage payment to the remote personal computer for use by the customer;

wherein the customer can obtain postage from the vendor without having a meter license from the postal service.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining an origin of deposit postal code for the requested transaction.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information from the customer includes a username, password and credit card information whereby a personal account is established for subsequent transactions.

4-8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the origin of deposit postal code is included in the information from the customer.

10-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A system for dispensing postage over the Internet to a remote personal computer for printing, the system comprising:

a data center accessible over the Internet;

means at the data center for maintaining at least one metering account for a vendor, the at least one metering account being associated with a meter license from a postal service obtained by licensed to a the vendor;

means at the data center for receiving over the Internet a request for postage, the request being initiated by a customer of the vendor using the remote personal computer, the customer not having a meter license from the postal service;

means at the data center for generating evidence of postage payment in response to the request for postage; and

means at the data center for accounting for the generated evidence of postage payment in the metering account associated with the license obtained by licensed to the vendor,

wherein the customer can obtain evidence of postage payment from the vendor without having a meter license from the postal service.